



Always Ready
Always There

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116th Cav conducts commo exercise

Story and photo by Sgt. Christian Duplessie,
116th Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs

For the first time in recent history, all of the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team's mission command system assets were gathered in one location during June 2015 Drill.

The 116th's S6 section conducted a validation exercise in preparation for a critical upcoming rotation at the National Training Center in August.

"Basically we are patching and updating all of our communications systems and validating they all work. In effect this is essentially the S6 gunnery, Brigade S6 Officer Maj. Matthew Maes said.

Spc. Erron Nowland & Sgt. Christopher Hanna Monitor communications and UAS systems as part of the S6 VALEX during June Drill. Brigade Mission Command assets assembled together for the first time in recent history for a VALEX in preparation for NTC.

The brigade has never had all of these assets in one place at the same time for something like this before. "It's a great opportunity for us to make sure everything is functional," said Maes.

The equipment on site for the VALEX included everything from intelligence systems to communications assets as well as assets from the 183rd Aviation Battalion and the 116th's Unmanned Aerial Systems unit.

The S6 is responsible for setting up and maintaining all of the Brigade and Battalion

communications systems on the battlefield.

"We're typically at a site before everyone else and there after everyone leaves, making sure all the equipment is properly taken care of and functioning," said Maes. "Take the typical day for an HHC Soldier and add about 6-8 hours of work and that's what it takes for us to keep everything going. It's pretty much controlled chaos," Maes said.

While they aren't expecting anything they aren't trained to handle, Maj. Maes says the S6 shop knows NTC is going to present some extreme and unique challenges.

"Heat and electronics don't go together," said Maes. "We're going to be working around the clock to make sure these systems stay functional so that the rest of the Brigade can do their jobs."

"I know my guys are motivated for this though, they enlisted so they could do signal work...I think we're better prepared than we've ever been, and that we'll do as good as any active duty unit."

Guardian Online Staff

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